



WHEN ANXIETY BECOMES TOO MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT

Global economic turmoil. Shrinking 401Ks. Layoffs. Foreclosures. War. With everything that's going on these days, it might seem that anyone who's not feeling anxiety just isn't paying attention.

But the anxiety many people live with is more than a normal reaction to bad news. It lessens their enjoyment of life. It creates health risks for some. In the worst cases, it's completely debilitating.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 40 million American adults suffer from anxiety disorders each year, making this set of mental disorders among the most common in the country. Anxiety disorders may appear in a number of ways, ranging from social anxiety disorder to post traumatic stress disorder. If worries, phobias or similar feelings have persisted and are interfering with your ability to work or otherwise live life the way you want, you may benefit from some help. Call your EAP for an evaluation and possible referral.

STRATEGIES FOR CALMING ANXIETY

Even before anxiety rises to the level of a diagnosable disorder, the distress you feel can be bad for you. That distress threatens physical and emotional health. It can cause sleepless nights, poor eating habits, substance abuse and other behaviors that wear the body down. It can render you indecisive, irritable, depressed and isolated.

So, how can you cope with everyday stresses before they escalate into something worse? Here are a few strategies that can help:

- » **Work on being optimistic.** There are ways to learn to think positively and avoid the negative thinking that leads to anxiety. If you think you've heard that here before, you have. Take a look at December's newsletter for "Learning to See the Glass Half Full."
- » **Take time to relax.** Quiet time is restorative. Make a point of scheduling it for yourself. If music soothes you, have your favorites playing.
- » **Bring the laughter back into your life.** A good laugh releases tension. Perhaps you're a "Napoleon Dynamite" fan. Or maybe it's anything with the Marx Brothers. Or what about that friend who invariably cracks you up? Do something to reconnect your funny bone.
- » **Take actions that make you feel in control.** Work on getting more organized. Sharpen your financial planning skills. Get help with the eldercare problem you've been wrestling with. Instead of worrying alone about "life issues," call your EAP for the help you need in order to act.
- » **Exercise, eat properly and develop other healthy habits.** Good health eliminates some major worries. There are no guarantees, of course, but the choices you make affect your risks for many ailments.
- » **Avoid self-medication.** Excessive use of alcohol and other substance abuse may feel like temporary cures for anxiety. They're not. They just create more reasons to worry.

Much like depression, anxiety can reach a point at which the best self-help advice in the world is useless. If you're so overwhelmed by worry that you feel you really can't help yourself, call your EAP right away.

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This article is for informational and self-help purposes only. It should not be treated as a substitute for financial, medical, psychiatric, psychological or behavioral healthcare advice, nor as a substitute for consultation with a qualified professional.

Feeling Anxious? Call your EAP!

Your Employee Assistance Program provides help in many areas that create worries in your daily life. You can ask about:

- » Emotional health
- » Nutrition and physical fitness
- » Alcohol and substance abuse
- » Relationships with co-workers

Call *any time* for a telephonic consultation.

For more information, call
(866) EAP-4SOC
(866) 327-4762

TDD callers, please dial (800) 327-0801

Or visit us online at:
www.eap4soc.mhn.com
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